

Admission to the event was free to the public other than for the “Jazzy B” concert on July 18th, for which tickets were sold at \$2 each, not as a revenue generation opportunity but rather, to allow for crowd control; the \$2 simply covered the cost of the administration fee that related to sale of the tickets.

The Festival was the largest multi-cultural event ever held in Surrey, with attendance estimated to be over 60,000 people over the three days. Surrey received a significant amount of favourable press both locally and regionally. Media sponsors such as Global TV, The Province, the Now Newspaper, RED FM and Jack FM were part of the event and found profiling the event to be beneficial to their respective organizations. Media who were not official sponsors of the event, such as CTV, CBC, Channel M and Chai Time also reported on the event.

Numerous positive comments from the general public have been received through the Mayor’s Office and the Special Events Office, with requests for the City to host a similar event in 2009. Exit surveys of attendees indicated that 75% thought the event was above average or excellent. A survey of Pavilion operators indicated that 90% rated their overall event experience as either above average or excellent and that they would be interested in participating again next year. The limited negative feedback that was received related to noise levels, lack of parking and increased traffic problems associated with the event.

Based on the positive outcomes from the 2008 Festival, the MAC adopted a resolution at its meeting on Tuesday September 16, 2008 to recommend to City Council that the Fusion Festival become an annual event for the City of Surrey.

If a Fusion Festival is to be held in 2009, planning for the event must start in the autumn of 2008. This relates to commencing the raising of sponsorship funding, reserving equipment used in the production of the event, and selecting and booking entertainment and multicultural exhibitors.

Financing the Fusion Festival

The budget for the 2008 Surrey Fusion Festival was \$690,000. This funding was achieved as follows:

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Federal Government (CCC funding) | \$320,000 (one-time funding) |
| City of Surrey (CCC matching funds) | \$220,000 (one-time funding) |
| Sponsorships | \$120,000 |
| Event revenues (pavilion fees, food sales, etc.) | \$30,000 |

The significant costs in staging a three-day multicultural festival are in production management, sound and lighting, staging, artist’s fees, fireworks, marketing, event labour and security.

Lantern Festival

The inspiration for the 2008 Wandering Angels Lantern Festival was a similar event held as part of the Surrey Arts Centre re-opening in September 2002. In 2006, with a grant from ArtsNow, a Lantern Festival was held near the Tom Binnie Recreation Centre and the Scotiabank Plaza, attracting 500 participants of all ages and cultural backgrounds. A third Lantern Festival was held August 30, 2008 in Holland Park. Prior to that event the project team performed community outreach and engaged over a dozen organizations including groups from the Surrey Food Bank,

the Klahoweya Aboriginal Cultural Centre, Ted Kuhn Tower senior's facility and Old Yale Road Elementary School. The evening event consisted of various themed lantern installations located throughout the park. The event was animated with live performances by musicians, dancers, stilt walkers, shadow puppetry and fire performances. Approximately, 1,200 people representing various age groups and cultural backgrounds attended the event.

The Lantern Festival Project was intended to:

- Provide residents of Whalley, City Centre and the City of Surrey with the opportunity to celebrate Whalley as a positive place;
- Develop the skills of community members to deliver future projects;
- Strengthen and celebrate diversity and community identity in an accessible family-oriented atmosphere;
- Involve youth in skills development and in creating positive artistic expressions of community identity; and
- Involve local artists in the planning, workshops and delivery of the event.

A vital aspect of this project is the Community Artist studio. The studio was located in a vacant storefront on the East Whalley Ring Road; it opened in April and over a four-month period volunteers and local artists assisted in the creation of large lantern installations. The artists and volunteers collected recycled items to transform into elements for the art pieces. The artists also trained to perform at the festival. Representatives from the Leader and the Now community newspapers attended the Artist Studio on numerous occasions to collect information for stories that were published prior to and after the event.

Financing the 2008 Lantern Festival

The budget for the 2008 Lantern Festival was \$60,000. This funding was achieved as follows:

| | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| Sponsorship - | \$10,000 |
| City Contribution - | \$50,000 (one-time funding) |

DISCUSSION

Currently, there are no appropriations in the Five-Year Financial Plan for staging either a Fusion Festival or Lantern Festival and there are no readily apparent grants available from senior governments or other outside agencies for such events. As such, if the City hosts these two community events in 2009, the only identified funding sources would be the City's operating budget, direct event revenues and sponsorship funds raised from the community. The \$320,000 contribution that was made by the Federal government for the Fusion Festival in the 2008 event will not be available in 2009.

Raising new sponsorship funds is becoming an increasingly difficult challenge due to the number of large City events for which funding from sponsors is being raised. These include WinterFest, Canada Day, the Children's Festival, and the Mayor's Charity Ball. In 2008 over 40% of the sponsorship funding generated for Fusion Festival came from residential developers in the City Centre area. However, due to the uncertain economic climate, it will likely be more difficult to secure the same amount of sponsorship revenue from this source in the coming year. With this

being said, there may be other sponsors interested in providing funding for the Festival if given the opportunity.

Options for Surrey Fusion Festival 2009

The following options have been considered in relation to the Fusion Festival for 2009:

1. *Deliver a similar 3-day Fusion Festival Celebration in 2009 as took place in 2008*

Under this option the event would be of the same quality and magnitude as the 2008 Surrey Fusion Festival and would allow for securing high-level entertainment. This option would require the same budget as the 2008 event. Under this option, assuming the same level of sponsorship revenue as 2008, the **City would need to include in the 2009 budget \$540,000.**

2. *Deliver a 3 day Fusion Festival Celebration in 2009 similar to the 2008 Festival and charge admission to the event:*

This option would rely on ticket sales to assist in replacing the Federal grant of \$320,000 that was received in 2008. As part of the 2008 event, a survey of attendees was undertaken. Out of 240 event participants surveyed, 30% indicated they would be willing to pay a \$1 to \$4 admission fee to the event; another 30% said they would be willing to pay a \$5 to \$10 admission fee; 15% said that they were willing to pay an admission of \$11 - \$20; and 25% said they would not be willing to pay for admission. If the City were to charge \$5 per person for admission to the 2009 event and it is assumed that the event drew 75% of the attendance as the 2008 Festival, admissions could potentially generate up to \$225,000 in revenue. However, the City has generally taken much pride over the years in providing free admission to the public for significant quality events in the City and has enjoyed a positive reputation for this approach in this family-oriented city and including positive media attention. Under this option the **City would need to include in the 2009 budget \$315,000.**

3. *Reduce the scale of the Festival in 2009 to reflect the loss of the Federal Grant for the event that was available in 2008*

Under this option the Festival would be a two-day event, and the number of entertainment stages would be reduced from five to two. This option would have a reduced budget for the more expensive “name” entertainment and attempt to focus more on local artists. **Under this option, the City would need to include in the 2009 budget \$220,000.**

4. *Do not hold a Surrey Fusion Festival in 2009*

Under this option, the City would not hold the Fusion Festival in 2009 and use its resources for other purposes.

Evaluation of Options:

The City of Surrey has a diverse population and has as one of its objectives to ensure a welcoming and inclusive environment for all of its residents. The Fusion Festival clearly supports this City objective and provides an opportunity for the City's residents to learn about the various cultures represented in our City in a comfortable environment. The event promotes harmony and goodwill across cultures. It was also a very well attended event, which demonstrates its validity from the perspective of the community. Staff recommends that the Festival be continued in 2009 within the funding that is available to the City. In this regard, it is recommended that Council support the continuation of the Fusion Festival in 2009 in accordance with Option 3. above.

Future of the Fusion Festival

In the more distant future, as the Fusion Festival matures, it would be desirable for the Festival to be planned and staged by an independent Society, which may receive a grant from the City for the staging of the Festival but which could leverage resources and expertise from cultural groups and organizations in relation to planning and staging the Festival. This model would be similar to the model by which the annual Cloverdale Rodeo and Exhibition is managed.

Lantern Festival

Although the Lantern Festival was well-planned in 2008 and provided an additional event for the citizens of Surrey to enjoy, given the cost of the event in comparison to the number of participants, staff are of the view that the Lantern Festival should not be funded for 2009 and that the City focus its attention on the continuation of the Fusion Festival.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above discussion, it is recommended that Council direct staff to include an appropriation of \$220,000 in the 2009 budget for the purpose of planning and holding a Fusion Festival in 2009 in accordance with Option 3. as described in this report.

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